

THE  
ROMANCE  
OF  
REAL LIFE.

BY CHARLOTTE SMITH.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

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THE MARRIAGE OF THE  
D U K E   O F   G U I S E.

IT is unnecessary here to enter into the history of the family of the Duke of Guise, the particulars of which are so well known. Charles de Lorraine, the eldest son of Henry the celebrated Duke of Guise, who was assassinated in the castle of Blois, by the order of Henry the Third of France, was made prisoner on the same day, and confined in the castle of Tours; from whence he escaped in August 1591, and rejoined the faction called the League,

VOL. III.            B            League,

League, whose violence had so long desolated France; and who, after the death of Henry the Third, opposed that excellent monarch and amiable man Henry the Fourth. When this league was broken, by his having become “the conqueror of his own,” he generously forgave, and even took into his favour the Duke of Maine, who had been its leader; whose nephew, the young Duke of Guise, was received at court at the same time, and entrusted with the government of Provence. After the assassination of Henry the Great, the Duke of Guise still held some places of trust under his son Louis the Thirteenth; but the house of Guise was so much the object of envy and suspicion, on account of its former power, and the illustrious men it had produced, that care was taken

not to raise it again too high by honours and emoluments: and at length, Cardinal Richelieu grew so dissatisfied with the Duke of Guise, that he obliged him to quit France. He retired to Florence, and died in the Sienois in 1640, leaving several children by his wife Henrietta Catharine de Joyeuse, only daughter of Henry de Joyeuse, Marechal of France, and widow of Henry de Bourbon, Duke de Montpensier. His son, Henry de Lorraine, born in 1514, became (by the death of his eldest brother) Duke of Guise. He seemed to inherit the spirit, as well as the personal perfections of his grandfather, the celebrated Duke of Guise. His figure and his exploits, which were those of an hero of romance, made him very acceptable to the ladies; while his inconstancy

and perfidy punished many of them for their partiality. He had been originally designed for the church, and possessed, by a sort of ecclesiastical succession peculiar to the house of Guise, the archbishopric of Rheims, and some of the richest abbeys in the kingdom; though he had never taken any degree or vow, to qualify himself for those dignities. His first attachment was to Anne d'Mantoue, who was his relation, and who was afterwards married to the Palatine of the Rhine. Cardinal de Richelieu, who foresaw that a marriage between this lady and the Duke of Guise would be prejudicial to the interests of France, divided them, by putting her into a convent, from whence, however, she escaped, and when the Duke of Guise joined the party of the Count de Soissons

(which

(which party, under pretence of delivering the kingdom from the administration of the Cardinal, covered more dangerous projects) she found means to follow him, in man's apparel, and overtook him at Cologne. But the Duke, either really apprehensive for her safety, or perhaps cured of his love by the rash fondness of his mistress, refused to let her continue with him, and insisted on her returning to Paris; under pretence that his tenderness would not allow him to let her hazard her person, among the dangers and inconveniences to which the service he was upon exposed him.

The Duke now entered with his usual impetuosity into the conspiracy, which took a very alarming form, and was sanctioned by the specious name of "The League formed to preserve

the peace of Christendom." As Archbishop of Rheims he was the first spiritual peer, and as Duke of Guise, the most ancient temporal peer of France; but these ties he broke through, and was declared General of the armies of the League.

The King prosecuted him for rebellion; and by an arret he was declared guilty of treason, sentenced to be beheaded, and his effects confiscated; which sentence was executed on him in effigy a few days afterwards, and all his property feized by the Crown.

The Duke went to Brussels, where he took upon him the command of the troops, which were sent thither by the Emperor and the King of Spain. There he found his aunt, the Dutchess of Chevreuse, who had been obliged

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to quit France for her intrigues against Cardinal Richelieu ; and at her house he became acquainted with the Countess de Bossu, a young and beautiful widow, whose vivacity and personal attractions were more than sufficient to inflame a heart so susceptible of the power of beauty as was that of the Duke of Guise.

The anecdotes of that time give an account of their acquaintance and its consequence ; which is perhaps somewhat heightened by the lively imagination of the writers, who, to bring truth nearer to romance, have embellished it with their own colouring. However, as there are no other accounts of the commencement of this connection, it must be related in their manner.

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seen the Countess of Bossu at the house of the Dutchess of Chevreuse, was equally charmed by her beauty, and amused with her vivacity. The lady, on her part, thought such a conquest as that of the handsomest and most accomplished man in Europe, deserved all her attention, and that she might forgive herself even some unusual advances to secure it. These, however, she conducted with so much art, that the Duke grew every day more in love; and when Madame de Bossu thought he was enough so to refuse her nothing, she spoke to him of marriage; to which the Duke answered, that he desired nothing so much as to unite his destiny with hers:—but if Madame de Bossu had known more of his real character, she might have perceived, that he would not thus readily

readily have entered into engagements, had he thought them binding ; and that he only wished to amuse himself during his exile. She knew enough to doubt the performance of his promise ; but, flattered by the hope of seeing in her fetters him for whom so many vainly sighed, she pretended to be the dupe of his ready profession, while she in fact meditated how to make him hers. With this view, as it was now the finest part of the year, she made a party to go to a beautiful seat she had, a league from Brussels, where she contrived to amuse the Duke for some days, with every thing she thought agreeable to him. The Duke, flattered by her attention, spoke to her more passionately than he had yet done ; to which the Countess answered, that if he was sincere in his professions, if his  
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love was as great as he pretended, he would hasten the completion of their marriage. The Duke protested that there was nothing he so ardently desired as to be united for ever with so amiable a person. Madame de Boffu, who was in hopes she should bring him to that declaration, then told him, he might immediately convince her of his veracity, and secure the happiness he seemed so much to desire, for that she had a priest and a notary ready, who would instantly perform the ceremonies. The Duke, who certainly did not believe a marriage under such circumstances would be binding to him, consented with as much apparent satisfaction as if he had been sincere. Manselle, the almoner of the army, was called in, who gave them a dispensation, for want of the proper banns, and

and then the nuptial benediction. The next day the Duke returned to Brussels, leaving the Countess de Bossu extremely happy, at being, as she imagined, Duchess of Guise, and wife to the most charming man of the age.

Whatever care had been taken to keep this transaction secret, it became in a few weeks the conversation of Brussels; the Duke d'Elbeuf, and the Duchess de Chevreuse, both spoke to the Duke upon it in a style of severity he was by no means disposed to bear. His respect for his aunt, Madame d'Chevreuse, made him listen to her reproaches with some appearance of patience; but his fiery temper could ill brook the remonstrances of the Duke d'Elbeuf, whom he answered in terms so full of rage and indignation, that a challenge passed between them;

and

and they were prevented fighting only by the interposition of the Archduke.

Extremely irritated to think that any one should dare to pry into and blame his actions, he determined to shew how little he considered their disapprobation, by bringing Madame de Bossu home to his house, and owning her as his wife; which at first he meant not to do, and had even prevailed on her to conceal their marriage, by representing to her that it would be necessary for him to try to reconcile his family to the match, before he acknowledged it. The author of the life of Sylvia de Moliere, relates the means by which the marriage first became publickly known; but there seems to be much of fiction in the account, and it was probably fabricated by the romance-writers of the day. It afferts,

asserts, that the Duke of Guise and the Countess of Bossu felt towards each other that kind of sympathy, which informed each of the presence or approach of the other, when they had no other means of knowing it; and that this singular presentiment betrayed their connection, on the following occasion.—The Count de \*\*\* had long been in love with Madame de Bossu, and pursued her wherever she went, with an ardour which her coldness and even rudeness to him could not diminish. The Duke of Guise, whose superior merit did not preserve him from jealousy, saw these assiduities continued towards his wife with uneasiness; and he determined to know whether his absence would make any change in the behaviour of Madame de Bossu towards her importunate

nate admirer. Great rejoicings were about this time made at Brussels, for the birth of a prince of Spain; and, among other entertainments, there was to be a grand ball at the Countess of Santacroix's: several noblemen purposed to go thither masked, and dressed in fantastic habits; but the Duke of Guise, affecting great concern that he could not be of the party, took leave of his friends, and of Madame de Bossu, and went out of town, saying, he had affairs which would detain him three or four days. As soon, however, as night came he returned, and, having with great secrecy provided himself with an Indian habit, he mingled, without being remarked, with the party in masks, and entered the ball-room; he there beheld Madame de Bossu, with the Count sitting by her

her, as usual; but he had no time to make any remarks on her behaviour, for he had not been many minutes near her, before Madame de Boffu felt the emotion she always experienced on the approach of her husband, and, trusting rather to a sensation that had never deceived her, than to all he had told her of his journey, she arose to seek him among the disguised noblemen, and immediately knew him, though he had taken the utmost pains to alter his appearance: the transports they mutually discovered, and which they found it impossible to stifle, divulged the secret of their marriage.—“I have seen,” says the author of this narration, “an original letter of the Duke of Guise, upon this extraordinary instance of the sympathy between him and his wife; it was one of the most charming and

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and interesting letters I ever read : he even complained of the excess of his happiness," foreseeing, perhaps, that it was too great to last. In fact, a very few months afterwards he made his peace with the King, and returned to France ; and though he for some time continued to write to Madame de Boffu, he engaged in other attachments ; and at length thought of her no more, unless it was to contrive means to break the ties which bound them to each other.

At first, the unfortunate Madame de Boffu flattered herself, from the frequency and tenor of the letters she received from the Duke, that she should share with him his prosperity, as she had done his adversity ; during which she had advanced many sums of money for him, and extremely distressed

tressed herself. The Dutches Dowa-  
ger of Guise, who had other views for  
her son, used every artifice to prevent  
her being received in France. But  
Madame de Bossu, fearless of the dan-  
ger she incurred, determined at all  
events to see her husband, trusting that  
all his former tenderness would return  
when he beheld her: she was particu-  
larly induced to hope this from a letter  
she had received, in which he protested  
to her, that he was incapable of infi-  
delity; that his honour and his con-  
science, as well as his inclination, at-  
tached him to her; and he only la-  
mented, that the contagion of his mis-  
fortunes had reached her, whom he  
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hopes: she determined to disguise herself, and set out for France; and, travelling with equal expedition and secrecy, she threw herself into his arms, before he knew she was on her journey. He received her with kindness; but his mother was no sooner apprized of her arrival, than she went to the Queen, from whom she obtained an order for Madame de Bossu to quit the dominions of France instantly. This order was signified to her, and enforced by the remonstrance of the Duke of Guise; who told her, that all his endeavours and entreaties would be ineffectual to preserve her from insult, and even from personal danger, if she did not comply with it. Under such circumstances the unfortunate Countess was obliged to submit, and returned broken-hearted to her mother. The

Duke,

Duke, giving himself up to intrigue, and to the warmth of his ungovernable temper, soon after got into a quarrel with the Count de Coligni: they fought in the midst of the Court, and the Duke of Guise dangerously wounded and disarmed his antagonist. His mother was perpetually apprehensive for his safety, which he continually hazarded; she dreaded lest the old animosity should be renewed between him and the house of Condé, with whom the house of Guise had long been at variance; a renewal of which, she foresaw, would be attended with the most fatal events: she was, therefore, very desirous that the Duke should marry Mademoiselle de Longueville, niece to the great Condé. But the Duke had fallen in love with Mademoiselle de Pons; and as this

new attachment was, if possible, more violent than any he had yet felt, he positively refused to listen to any overtures in regard to Mademoiselle de Longueville. As he determined to marry Mademoiselle de Pons, it became necessary for him to enquire how far his marriage with the Countess de Bossu might prevent the completion of his wishes; and he found, that it would raise such impediments to his designs, as he should find it extremely difficult to obviate: this consideration, and the trouble he received from the Attorney-general (who prosecuted him for his offence against law and order, by fighting publicly with the Count de Coligni), determined him to go himself to Rome; where he hoped to obtain the dissolution of his engagements with Madame de Bossu.

At

At this time the civil war of Naples, occasioned by the heavy imposts laid on the people, broke out; Mazzienello, who was the leader of the tumult, being destroyed, the rebels had recourse to the Duke of Guise, who, by his descent, had a sort of claim to the kingdom of Naples. The Duke no sooner received the proposal of becoming their General, than with his usual impetuosity he accepted it; and, making his way through the fleet commanded by Don John of Austria, he arrived at Naples, and became Generalissimo of the rebel army. It is unnecessary here to relate the various events that occurred while he continued in this command. The charms of Mademoiselle de Pons, which had induced him to go to Rome, in hopes of being allowed to marry her, were now forgotten,

gotten, amid the attractions of the Neapolitan beauties: but his general gallantries among the lowest of the people, and his attachment to the daughter of a taylor in particular, disgusted those who at first had beheld him with admiration and respect; and at length his usual rashness made him commit an indiscretion, which put the town into the hands of the Spaniards. He had then recourse to flight; but was pursued, taken, and sent prisoner to Spain.

While this was passing, the unfortunate Countess of Bossu was sued by the Duke's creditors; and her effects, as well as the dower she possessed from her first husband, seized to satisfy their demands. Notwithstanding which, and all his neglect and cruelty, she no sooner heard of his imprisonment,

than

than she quitted the house of her mother, with whom she was obliged to reside, and went into France, meaning to pass from thence into Spain, to solicit his release, or share his confinement. Her friends, however, represented to her, that her journey would be absolutely fruitless; and prevailed upon her to return into Flanders. By the interposition of the great Condé, who then served the King of Spain against his native country, the Duke was soon after released: the Spanish court, indeed, gave him his liberty the more willingly, as they hoped that his turbulent and restless spirit would create new troubles in France. He was no sooner at liberty, than he disclaimed all obligations to the Prince of Condé, and complained loudly of the treatment he had received at Ma-

drid. The rashness of his character seemed to have gained strength by his confinement ; his politics and his love assumed a more violent cast ; the passion he had felt for Mademoiselle de Pons, seemed to return with more ardour than ever ; and he determined to make her his, at whatever price. But when he learned, too certainly, that during his absence she had received as a favoured lover Monsieur de Malicorne, a private gentleman, rage and indignation stifled all the emotions of tenderness he had felt for her ; he treated her with rudeness and insult, and insisted on her returning a pair of ear-rings, valued at a thousand crowns, which he had given her : he even sued her to oblige her to restore them ; but had the mortification

of

of losing his suit ; which circumstance depriving him of all patience and temper, he threatened personal vengeance against the object of his former attachment ; who, to avoid it, was driven to quit the kingdom.

Being then without any pursuit, and his capricious and violent temper making it impossible for him to remain long quiet, he sailed on another expedition to Naples, which did not answer his expectation ; and, on his return, a new passion, more violent than any he had yet felt, attached him to Mademoiselle de Gorce.

In 1664 he died, leaving no posterity. All his brothers died before him ; as did his sisters afterwards, unmarried. Thus ended the illustrious house of Guise ; the enterprizing ambition

bition of which had so long disturbed  
the tranquillity of France.

Madame de Bossu, ruined by the very means which she hoped would have made her the happiest woman in Europe, endeavoured to recover, from the heirs of the Duke of Guise, a jointure, as his wife. The process lasted many years, and she died before its termination, leaving her nearest relation, the Prince of Berghes, her heir; who endeavoured to recover, from the successors of the Duke of Guise, some part of the money that had been paid for the Duke. At the court of Rome, the department called the Rote\*, allowed the validity of her marriage; but the courts of law in

\* Chief jurisdiction of the court of Rome.

France,

France, through all of which the cause was carried, decided, that, as the marriage was celebrated without the usual forms, it was absolutely null, and of no effect.

THE

## CHEVALIER DE MORSAN.

THIS is perhaps one of the most romantic histories that the various occurrences of human life ever produced. Tho' several fictions have been founded on events similar to what is here related, fiction itself has hardly been able to produce a more extraordinary collection of circumstances; and perhaps the truth never having been perfectly known, adds to the interest of the story.—A notary at Paris, whose name was Charles Henry Donc, who was in a reputable

reputable situation, left, at his decease, his three children, a son and two daughters, to the care of his wife, Mary Clement. He had not been long dead, when his relations found the conduct of this woman so improper, and her profusion so great, that they apprehended she would dissipate the money left as a provision for the children; and that even the goods and effects in the house would be seized by her creditors, and the children be defrauded of every thing: since it is well known, in every country, that if the subalterns of the law once seize on property, it is never recovered without infinite loss, although it may have been unjustly taken. Under these apprehensions for the minors, the kindred of Charles Henry Donc petitioned to have a guardian appointed, to whom the

mother

mother might be obliged to account. The Sieur de Joigny was named their guardian; and, as Madame Donc, could not herself make up the accounts necessary to be produced on this occasion, she employed a man named Robert, clerk to a notary, to adjust her books; for which purpose he was obliged to be very frequently at the house. Margaret Charlotte Donc, the eldest of the children, then about fourteen, was uncommonly beautiful; Robert became violently in love with her, and solicited her mother's consent to marry her. The mother, who appears to have been an unprincipled and worthless woman, and who perhaps wished to relieve herself from the care of her children as soon as she could, gladly consented, and Robert had leave to make his addresses; which however

however were not likely to succeed, for Charlotte had conceived an antipathy to him from their first acquaintance, and absolutely refused to receive him as a lover. Her guardian, who thought that the lovely person of his ward, together with the fortune he hoped to save for her from the wreck of her father's property, might procure her a much better match, would not hear of sacrificing her to a man she disliked, and who was only clerk to a notary. He sent her to board at the convent of the sisters of St. Gervais, from whence she refused to return for some time to her mother; dreading lest the importunity of her disagreeable lover, aided by the authority of a parent she had always obeyed, might force her into a marriage she detested. Her fears on this head were but too

well founded. Robert, finding she did not as usual visit at home, determined to force her from her asylum in the convent; and her mother consented to the expedient. He took his measures so well, that seizing her as she came from Mass with some other pensioners, he carried her no one knew whither. The guardian complained to the police, but without effect; and nine or ten days afterwards Robert married her, in presence of her mother, and four other witnesses.

As there was now no remedy, the relations of the unfortunate girl thought it most prudent to drop the suit they had commenced against Robert, and she was obliged to submit to her destiny. But before the expiration of a month, she found that destiny so insupportable, that, after several alarm-  
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went ; but found even there no respite from the persecution of Robert ; who incessantly besieged the door of the convent, and even endeavoured to tear her from thence by force ; which twice obliged the nuns to lay complaints against him. But as these attempts failed, he had recourse to other means ; and commenced a suit against the Sieur Mars de Joigny, for detaining and secreting his wife. After long delays, the cause was heard before Monsieur Chauvelin, Advocate - general ; who said, that as the marriage was celebrated with the consent of the mother, and as the relations had suffered the parties to live together for some time without endeavouring to dissolve it, it was good, and could not be annulled. It was consequently confirmed, and Charlotte Donc was directed to return,

turn, within six months, to her husband. The fair, unfortunate Charlotte, and her relations, had attended in court to hear the decision: when it was over they went into the Hall \*, where Robert, approaching his wife, and affecting the greatest tenderness and affection, besought her, since all farther resistance was vain, to return with him to his house—she pushed him from her, and exclaiming, as she did it, “ There, “ wretch, take my last adieu ! ” she instantly disappeared, among the crowd in the Hall; nor could the utmost diligence on the part of Robert, discover any trace of her. After some days of fruitless search, he summoned the Sieur Mars de Joigny to produce his wife, or to inform him where she was. The

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Sieur Joigny, in his defence, declared, that he knew not the place of her retreat; and alledged, that as no sentence had put her into his care, he was not answerable for her appearance. With this answer Robert was obliged to withdraw his complaint; and to apply all his industry to discover his fugitive wife. But every effort he made was fruitless: he could neither find her, or hear whether she was yet among the living. After some years, in which he incessantly sought her, had elapsed, the passion falsely called love, and the thirst of vengeance, both of which had probably concurred in producing his ardent desire to find her, began to abate, and his enquiries were relaxed; and at length, after fifteen years, he concluded she was dead, and thought only of marrying again. Being, however, desirous of ascertaining his

his situation, he again laid his complaint before the Police, on the escape of his wife. But this last effort was as fruitless as the former; and now, being almost certain that, if she was not dead, she would never appear to claim him as her husband, he determined to remove to another quarter of the town, disengage himself from the acquaintance of all who remembered his marriage with Charlotte, and pass for a bachelor. In this character, after he had quitted all his former connections, he introduced himself to Magdalen Ponsignard, the widow of the Sieur Masson d'Angluse, a lawyer, who consented to marry him. She was near sixty years old; but she had money, which attracted Robert; though she had the precaution to have the marriage contract so drawn up, that each

party were to remain possessed of their separate property. This second alliance formed by Robert, was not happier than the first. Madame d'Angluse complained, very soon afterwards, that the most affronting outrages were exercised upon her: that he perpetually reproached her with her age; and, not contented with ill language only, that he even proceeded to the most cruel personal insults: and as she was not of a temper to suffer such treatment patiently, they soon came to extremities, and agreed only in one thing, which was to part, and that each should remain in unmolested possession of their own effects. In pursuance of this convention, the wife retired to a convent; where she had not been long resident, before Robert, who seems to have been possessed of one of those unhappy tempers

tempers which want somebody to torment, pursued her, and insisted on her returning to live with him. But she had found the life she had led with him so entirely insupportable, that neither threats nor intreaties could prevail upon her to encounter it again. She peremptorily and steadily refused; and having, in the course of the contest, learned more of her husband's former life, than had till then come to her knowledge, and discovered his marriage with Charlotte Donc; she resolved to try, whether she could not annul her own unhappy connection, by pleading, that as Robert's former wife was never proved to be dead, he had been guilty of bigamy in marrying again. She therefore commenced a process against him for bigamy; and demanded to have her marriage with

him dissolved, as being made while his former wife was living. The information collected by the counsel whom his second wife employed, completely proved the marriage of Robert with Margaret Charlotte Donc. He was summoned to appear, and to be examined. He had nothing to offer, but his prosecution of the persons who were supposed to have concealed his first wife; which he now renewed, in hopes of certifying her death: and, to shew that he had himself no doubt of it, he produced the deed, by which he had restored to her brother all the money he had received as the portion of Charlotte Donc. His suit was commenced against the Sieur Mars de Joigny; against Madame Royer, who was his friend and confidant; and against the Sieur d'Imonville and his wife,

wife, at whose house Madame Royer lived, the Sieur d'Imonville being her uncle: and to these persons he joined Mademoiselle du Clos, the celebrated actress; who, he pretended, had been the principal agent in concealing his wife, Charlotte Donc; who, he alledged, had been dead seven years: and he produced as evidence of the fact, the following register, from the parish of St. Sulpice: —“This 10th  
“ of November, 1723, was interred,  
“ Maximilian de Morsan, aged twen-  
“ ty-two years, or thereabouts; the  
“ son of Maximilian de Morsan, gen-  
“ tleman, and of Emily de Constance,  
“ his wife, who died yesterday in the  
“ street Mazarine, at the house of  
“ Monsieur Poiffan; Sieur d'Imon-  
“ ville, Jean de Lajarh, &c. &c.  
“ friends of the deceased, being pre-  
“ sent.” —

“ sent.” — Though this register appears to have no relation whatever to the unfortunate fugitive, Charlotte Donc, Robert asserted that it was she only who was interred ; and that she died of the small-pox : to substantiate an assertion so extraordinary, he related the following particulars. He said, that when his wife, after hearing the decision against her, had escaped from him through the crowd that attended in the Hall of the Court of Justice, she found refuge in the house of the Sieur d’Imonville ; where, as soon as she arrived, Madame Royer had dressed her in the habit of an officer, with a scarlet coat, a laced hat, a sword, and other accoutrements ; and she assumed the title of the Chevalier du Coudray : but the habit she had taken could not cure or conceal the terrors of a woman ;

man ; who, in perpetual fear of being known, and carried back to her husband, was for some months never seen to look at a stranger, or even to hear an unknown voice without the greatest agony ; and who, when any one she did not know came into the house, would frequently hide herself under the beds, or in the closets, from the pursuit of those emissaries of her husband, who she fancied were perpetually following her. D'Imonville, his wife and niece, left nothing untried to re-assure her : they carried her from their own house to one in the rüe de Mazarine, faux-bourg St. Germain, which was inhabited by Mademoiselle du Clos, where the name of the Chevalier du Coudry was exchanged for that of the Chevalier des MARETS.—Robert farther asserted, that his wife, now a pupil of the

the school of La du Clos, by degrees forgot her terrors, and became initiated in the gallantries which passed at the house of the actress, with whom she was a great favourite. D'Imonville had a villa at Combe-de-la-Ville, where frequent parties of pleasure were made, at which Mademoiselle du Clos presided, and which were enlivened by the talents and spirit of the Chevalier des Marets. Hunting, balls, and the pleasures of the table, where liberty and gaiety only were consulted, failed not to attract to this villa the young and licentious among the rich and great. To those who were not in the secret, the Chevalier seemed the most amiable of men : but to those who were admitted to greater intimacy, he appeared more captivating, as a young woman of beauty and spirit,

spirit, whose adventures and disguise gave greater eclat to the charms of which nature had been so lavish.—She now appeared under the name of the Chevalier de Morsan; and the Sieur Mars de Joigny often went to this house, at Combe-de-la-Ville. It happened that he arrived there one day, when a large company was assembled, and entering hastily the room where they were, he so far forgot himself, as to say to the Chevalier de Morsan, “ Well, Charlotte, how are you to-day ? ” This occasioned a loud laugh among such as were acquainted with the metamorphosis, and excited the wonder of those who were not: these last, endeavouring to gain more intelligence from the Sieur de Joigny, he hastily put an end to the conversation.—This circumstance, the frequent change

change of name, and the mysterious stories that were told of the birth of the Chevalier de Morsan, raised great curiosity in the minds of many, who had seen him with La du Clos or the Sieur d'Imonville. Sometimes he was said to be a foreigner, travelling for improvement; sometimes the son of a Prince, who was for reasons of state obliged to be concealed. The curate of Combe-de-la-Ville, who once saw him in the bed usually occupied by Madame d'Imonville, expressed his suspicions of his sex; the Chevalier turned him into ridicule, and refused to answer his enquiries. But the servants of the house, and several other persons, had no doubt but that the pretended young man was a woman. After Charlotte Donc had for some time worn the masculine habit, she seemed to have acquired

acquired masculine courage: she had a quarrel with some young man in the neighbourhood of Combe-de-la-Ville, accepted his challenge, and was actually wounded. The surgeon, however, who dressed the wound, was never called upon in the trial. It was not long afterwards that she came to Paris, to a house La du Clos had taken in the rue Mazarine; there she was seized with the small-pox, attended with the worst symptoms: and, in the danger of losing her life, all the transactions of that life seized on her disordered imagination: she incessantly implored the attendants to save her from her husband; and fancied she saw herself surrounded by soldiers, who were come to drag her to him. As the disease approached the crisis, it wore the most threatening aspect: spiritual

ritual consolation was thought necessary; and Father Constant, a monk of the Augustines, was sent for to administer the sacraments, and hear the dying confession of the Chevalier de Morsan. The Monk addressed him as such; but the hour was now come in which dissimulation was impossible. The pretended Chevalier said to the Monk, in a melancholy tone, “Alas! “I am not what you suppose: I am a “woman.” The Monk, astonished at what he heard, exclaimed—“How! are “you a woman?” On which the patient repeated a second time, “Yes; I am a “woman.” The Monk then asked her if she would have him reveal this secret to Mademoiselle du Clos? To which she answered, “Yes, tell her if you “will.”—Either the Priest was not aware of the immediate danger, or for some other

other reason, he delayed the last sacrament and confession till the next morning: in the interim the Chevalier expired.

—The deception, however, did not terminate with life: Michelle de la Neau, and her daughter, the former who had attended as a nurse during the illness, the latter who was servant to Mademoiselle du Clos, were employed to put the corpse into the coffin. They saw that it was the corpse of a woman: they expressed to La du Clos their surprize; who coldly answered, that since it was so, the world, who had accused her of entertaining the Chevalier as a lover, had wronged her, and had been deceived. The coffin, set on a bier, was placed at the door of La du Clos; and, to perpetuate the deceit, the sword of the deceased, and its scabbard, were laid on the coffin, as is usual when a mi-

litary man is buried. The spectators believed it was the funeral of an officer; and Charlotte Donc was buried as a Chevalier, after having passed as such for seven years. The Sieur d'Imonville, who Robert pretended was the principal contriver of the concealment, attended the funeral.—When the entry was made in the register of this funeral, a note was added, thus, “ You are not to suffer an extract of this to be taken.”

If this relation, given by Robert, was true, his wife was among the dead seven years before he was apprised of it; and she had been lost near fifteen, when by some means or other (but by what does not appear) he gained intelligence of the disguise in which she had lived. Seizing eagerly on a clue which promised to lead him to the discovery he had

had so long attempted in vain, he pursued his enquiries at Combe-de-la-Ville, and at Paris, among every rank of people with whom D'Imonville and Du Clos were connected, till he had collected the circumstances from which he formed this narrative: and in this research he had been assisted by Anthony Donc, the brother of Charlotte; who being, in case of her death, heir to whatever his father had left, was equally interested in penetrating the mystery. Their united enquiries produced facts, which, they affirmed, made a positive discovery of the death and interment of Charlotte Donc.—Having a collection of proofs, which they thought sufficient to establish the facts, they no longer hesitated to lay it before a court of justice. Thirteen witnesses were examined, whose evidence

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amounted to what has been before related—That an individual, who was believed to be a woman, had lived with La du Clos for some years; who was at first called the Chevalier du Coudray, afterwards des Marets; but latterly had been known by the name of the Chevalier de Morsan; and who was supposed to be Charlotte Donc, the fugitive wife of Robert. The nurse, who had attended her in her last illness, swore to the circumstance of her apprehending that soldiers surrounded her bed to force her to her husband; and that, on laying her out, she was found to be a woman. The servants who had lived with La du Clos, the Augustine monk, and some other witnesses, gave testimony of those facts which have been before recapitulated: but none swore positively, that the person

passing

passing under the name of the Chevalier de Morsan, was Charlotte Donc. But Robert pretended, that the time when his wife disappeared, answered exactly to that when this stranger first was seen in the society of De Joigny the guardian, Du Clos, D'Imonville, and others with whom De Joigny was connected; which, added to the testimonies of so many witnesses, and to circumstances so unusual, must convince the court, that the Chevalier de Morsan was no other than the wife of Robert.

—The counsel for Robert, in pleading on this ground, against those who had concealed his wife, represented the enormity of the offence they had committed, against all law and order, as well as against religion and justice. They said, that not content with having stolen the wife from her husband, to

whom she was directed to return, and having led her into an irregular and scandalous course of life; with having imposed on the world, and violated the laws of society, by the disguise under which she had lived, and under which she had been buried; they dared to enter a falsity into a book kept for the security of that society: in which, if frauds were thus allowed, no man's property could be safe from the attacks of pretenders; no man could venture to bestow his daughter or his sister in marriage, or to marry himself: and, in short, it was a fraud that struck at the very root of social compact and good order. But so conscious were they of the probability of detection from this quarter, that they tried to prevent an extract from being taken from a book, which, in fact, belonged to the whole community,

community, by inserting in the margin a note, more likely however to excite curiosity, than to prevent its being gratified ; since, if it was really the body of the Chevalier de Morsan which was interred, why should it be concealed ? In falsifying the name and sex of the person buried, they were guilty of a capital crime ; the punishment for which is a confiscation of all the effects of the offending parties.

Monsieur Brisson, counsel for D'Joigny, D'Imonville, and Du Clos, undertook, in opposition to these assertions, to prove, that the person who had lived so long with La du Clos, was not Charlotte Donc, but the Chevalier de Morsan, a foreigner ; whose existence admitted of no doubt, and whose history he could without difficulty trace. He said, that the Abbé Chamil-

lard, a Jesuit, had been acquainted with this young man in Bavaria, of which country he was a native ; that, in 1715, he came to Paris, and told the Abbé Chamillard, to whom he immediately addressed himself, that affairs of the utmost consequence had obliged him to quit his country, and come into France. The Abbé, affected by his misfortunes, undertook to find for him a proper situation, and to do him all the service in his power. In consequence, he introduced him to Madame Royer, with whom he was much acquainted, and desired her to look out for an asylum for this young stranger ; who, thereupon, engaged her uncle D'Imonville to receive him into his house, assuring him that the Abbé Chamillard knew the time would come, when it would be in his power to repay his kindnes

kindness with interest. The Sieur d'Imonville, who from this understood he was a stranger of illustrious birth, willingly offered him his house and his purse; and he continued with him for some time. At first, he told his protector, that he was the son of Maximilian de Morsan and Emily de Constance; and that an affair, which he could not reveal without great prejudice to himself, had obliged him to leave Munich. By this means he evaded for some time the questions which were put to him: but at length, sensible of the kindness with which he was treated in the house of D'Imonville, and the repeated acts of friendship he had experienced from him and his family, he told them, he would no longer conceal his real history from them, especially as he had hopes of being

being very soon in a situation to shew his gratitude for their attention to him.

“ You have”, continued he, “ proved your attachment to me beyond a doubt, and are worthy of all my confidence; I will not therefore conceal from you, that I am the natural son of the Elector of Bavaria; who my mother was, I have never been so happy as to learn.” The Sieur D’Imonville, charmed with this confidence, and to find that he had been of use to the son of a sovereign Prince, redoubled his attentions: he thought it no breach of confidence to reveal to the Abbé Chamillard what he had heard; who answered,—“ What you now tell me, I have long known: I assured you, when I first introduced this young man to your acquaintance, that he was of high birth, and I did not deceive you. I

am

am happy in having been the means of your forming a connection, which cannot fail to enrich you. His affairs at present are in a train, that affords him a prospect of very soon acquitting himself towards you."—D'Imonville, his wife, and niece, concluded that the affair which was in agitation, was a design of the Elector of Bavaria to legitimate his son.—Some months passed away, during which the family removed to another house, the first floor of which was inhabited by Mademoiselle du Clos, the celebrated comedian, with whom they became acquainted.—In 1719, the Chevalier de Morsan told Monsieur D'Imonville, that his affairs were now nearly settled; that they were likely to succeed beyond his hopes; but that it was necessary for him to shew himself at Munich: he therefore

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therefore besought D'Imonville not to refuse him the last favour he should have occasion to ask of him; which would put him in a condition to repay all the rest: D'Imonville easily understood that this was a supply of money for his journey. D'Imonville could not himself raise the sum required; but he borrowed of a notary two thousand three hundred livres. He purchased for the Chevalier proper cloaths to appear in at Munich, and a post-chaise; and, after having made these preparations, expected that he should depart: but the young man, when he saw every thing ready, could not resolve to go; he had a love engagement, which he had not resolution to break through; and he contrived every day some new excuse to delay his journey. D'Imonville, who had formed sanguine expectations

pe~~c~~tations of the future power and wealth of the Chevalier, was extremely chagrined at this negligence, after all the exertions he had made for him; and he resolved to remonstrate seriously with him on the folly of his conduct. The Chevalier, on being pressed by D'Imonville to name an early day for his journey, had no longer any pretence to delay it; but he flew into a passion, and words grew high between them. La du Clos, who was in the apartment beneath, heard the noise, and came up to enquire what was the matter. The Sieur d'Imonville explained the subject of their contest; and said, he had now made his last effort on the Chevalier: whereupon La du Clos, addressing the young man, said to him, " My dear child, since Monsieur d'Imonville can do no more for you,

you

you shall come and live with me, and I will take care of you." The Chevalier, transported at having found so charming a protectress, accepted the offer La du Clos made him; who gave him an apartment on the floor she inhabited, and from that time supported him entirely, and even lent him money to repay the advance made by D'Imonville; whose remonstrance he soon ceased to resent, and they continued to live in friendship, as before this little disagreement.—In 1722 he was desirous of entering into the army, and served for some time as a Cadet, in the company of the Chevalier de Malherbe. But his friends representing to him, that the duty of a soldier was incompatible with the attention his private affairs required, he soon afterwards resigned.—Till 1723, he lived

very

very much in company, and was well received in the most brilliant parties in the neighbourhood of St. Germain. He frequently saw the Abbé Chamil-lard; and was on an equal footing of intimacy with Father Richard, an Au-gustine. But in the month of No-vember of that year he was seized with the small-pox, which soon appeared to be of the worst sort. The fever attending it deprived him of his senses, many days before his death; and in that situation he was visited by Father Con-stant, who found it too late to admini-ster the sacrament: and on the tenth of November the Sieur d'Imonville paid him the last tribute of friendship, by attending his remains to the grave.

Such was the history related by Mon-sieur Briffon, for his clients; whose pur-pose it was to prove, that the individual,

passing under the name of the Chevalier de Morsan, was not a woman; and certainly not Charlotte Donc, the wife of Robert.

The second wife of Robert, whose hope was, that, if the death of Charlotte Donc could not be proved, Robert would be deemed guilty of bigamy, and that she should by that means be released from her engagement with him; had collected every circumstance that could strengthen the belief of the Chevalier de Morsan being really the person he represented. In opposition to the witnesses brought by the other party, she produced persons who gave their testimony to many particulars of the life of the Chevalier de Morsan. He was fond of violent exercise; understood fencing, the backsword, hunting, and shooting; and was a judge of horses. He was known to have

have passed whole days in field sports; a degree of fatigue which no woman could have undergone: and he frequently played matches at tennis, which kept him in extreme exercise for many hours. The husbands and fathers where De Morsan visited, were so far from supposing him to be a woman, that many of them had reason to complain of his gallantries; for his person was extremely handsome, and he was universally admired. Nor did his figure at all correspond with the description given of Charlotte Donc, who was of a middling size; for he was very tall and muscular: but it is certain, that a woman of middling height, if she dresses in men's cloaths, appears short. Many other particulars were brought, to prove that there was no analogy between Charlotte Donc and the Chevalier de Morsan.

The Court, after hearing many arguments on both sides, could not find any positive proof that the Sieurs de Joigny and d'Imonville, with Madame Royer and du Clos, had secreted Charlotte Donc, and buried her under a false name.— On the other hand, as the second wife of Robert could produce no proof of her being alive, either when Robert married a second time, or at the time she sued him, they would not condemn Robert for bigamy; whose second marriage, therefore, remained good in law: and the truth of this extraordinary affair continued unknown. The fate of the unfortunate Charlotte Donc was at all events deplorable. Whatever errors the peculiarity of her situation might have driven her into, were solely imputable to the cruelty and misconduct

misconduct of her mother.—Dreadful is the lot of a woman, driven into an indissoluble union with a wicked or worthless man, at an age when keen sensibilities make her feel all the misery of such a union; while resignation and patience, which time only can give, have not enabled her to subdue the violent emotions which such a prospect must excite. Indeed, who can, at any period of life, help shrinking from the view of wretchedness for which there is no remedy, from sufferings which can only terminate in the grave?

## JAMES LEBRUN.

IN a former volume is related the story of the unfortunate D'Anglade, who perished in misery and ignominy, through the prejudice of an unjust judge, and the malice of an inveterate prosecutor. The following narrative is another instance of the fallibility of human judgment; and, though the unfortunate sufferer was in an inferior rank of life, his fate was, if possible, more to be deplored than that of D'Anglade.

Madame Mazel was a woman who had passed the meridian of life: she was a widow,

a widow, possessed of an affluent fortune; and had three sons, all well established. René, the eldest, was a counsellor of parliament; George, the second, treasurer of France, for the district of Paris; and Michael, the youngest, major of the regiment of Piedmont.

But though her family were prosperous, they were not happy. Madame Mazel had taken an aversion to the wife of her eldest son; and had caused her to be confined in a convent, by an order from the King: and this she had interest enough to effect, though her son himself by no means lent her any assistance. The lady had contrived often to escape from her confinement, and had as often been seized and forced back by the machinations of her mother-in-law; whom, of course, she hated most inv-

F 3 terately.

terately. The conduct of Madame Mazel herself, was such as seemed but little to authorize the power she assumed to punish that of another: she had gaming-tables constantly in her house; and a man called the Abbé Poulard lived with her on a footing of intimacy, which did no honour to her reputation.

This lady's servants, in her hotel at Paris, were, two footmen, both lads between sixteen and eighteen years old; an old female cook; a coac' man; two young women who waited on her person; and James le Brun, who had lived with her twenty-nine years, and who was now her butler, intendant, and maître d'hôtel: he possessed all her confidence, and deserved it by his attachment to her interest, and his general integrity, which had recom-

mended him to the esteem of all who frequented the house. His mistress left to him all her receipts and payments; and never, in all the sums that passed through his hands, was there the least deficiency or mistake. The tradesmen, whom he paid regularly, and every other person connected with the affairs of Madame Mazel, spoke highly of his honesty and disinterested conduct: and, among other instances of his unblemished integrity, it was related of him, that one evening, after a very deep play had been held at his mistress's house, he, on clearing the apartments, found a sum of money, the owner of which (who did not know the sum she had lost, or what she had done with it) he took pains to discover, and returned her the whole. Le Brun had a wife and five children,

dren, and was the best of husbands and of fathers. His two eldest daughters were of that business which is in France termed coiffeuses; which rather answers to our idea of the tire-women of the last century, than to any attendant we have at present. In this employment they acquired reputation, not only for their skill, but their decent and regular manners: and their father, who had brought them up soberly and religiously, was so desirous of their morals being preserved, that though his mistress, whose hotel was much larger than she had occasion for, offered him an apartment in it for his whole family, he rather chose to hire an habitation for them, than to have his daughters in a house where gamesters, and other dissolute and idle people, were perpetually visiting.—Such

was

was the character of this unfortunate man, James le Brun.

That of the Abbé Poulard, the inmate of Madame Mazel, was far from being equally respectable. This man, who had taken his vows in the order of Jacobins, had lived among them for some years; and then, by a bull from the Pope surreptitiously obtained, he quitted that society, to enter into the order of Cluny: but, instead of doing so, he became the companion and confidential friend of Madame Mazel.

Admitted to a table where luxury and profusion reigned, the Abbé forgot the rules of his profession, and was so far from keeping any maigre days, that he criticised, sometimes with the asperity of a gluttonous master of the house, on such dishes as were not prepared

pared to his taste. His bed-chamber was on the third floor, sumptuously furnished with a bed of blue velvet lined with crimson silk, and every other article proportionably rich. In such a situation, it is not surprising that the Abbé Poulard chose rather to be excommunicated than to quit it: and he suffered, with great indifference, the excommunication to pass against him by the Grand Prior of the order of Cluny. Nor was he much more affected by an order given by the Advocate-general to the Jacobins, to seize and confine him. However, after an abode of six years in the house of Madame Mazel, he thought it convenient, for some reason or other, probably to avoid farther scandal, to take a lodging in the neighbourhood, though he still retained his apartment in

in her hotel, and frequently slept there: and, that he might at all hours have access to it, he had a master-key, which opened every chamber in the house, as well as the street-door.

By means of this man, George, the second son of Madame Mazel, who was known by the name of the Seigneur de Lignieres, became acquainted with his sister, the widow of a counsellor of Mans, whose beauty had made a deep impression on the heart of the Sieur de Lignieres, insomuch that he had promised to marry her: a match the most fortunate for her, and therefore greatly wished for by her, and her brother the Abbé, but opposed by Madame Mazel.—All these circumstances are related with the most minute and tedious particularity in the French original; as if to make the reader remark,

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mark, that the assassination of Madame Mazel was more likely to be imputed to the revenge of her eldest son's wife, or those who were interested in the marriage of the second, than to him on whom, unfortunately, the suspicions fell.

Her manner of life, however, was such, as made her liable to the designs of many others. Every Monday and Friday she kept an open table, where gamesters by profession, of both sexes, as well as persons who were unhappily addicted to that ruinous amusement, assembled to dine. After which the house, which was very large, was filled with parties of hazard and other games of chance, at which they continued the next day, and often till the next night. Madame Mazel herself always retired about eleven o'clock, having first gone round

round to the various tables, to accommodate the losers with money, who happened to be without, which she often did to a large amount—a circumstance which, of course, gave reason to suppose she had always considerable sums by her. Many of those who frequented her house, heard her, on various occasions, repeat, that she never had a less sum by her than two thousand pistoles.

She was known to have made a will, in which she had charged her eldest son, who was her principal legatee, with the maintenance and lodging of the Abbé Poulard, during his life. She had given six thousand livres to Le Brun; and divided, between him and her own woman, her linen and cloaths. This will was known to many, and was deposited in the hands  
of

of a notary; but she had repeatedly said it was her intention to make another.

The house she inhabited was in rue Maçon, near the Sorbonne; and, as a minute description of it seemed necessary to the French relater, it must be repeated here.—The house had four floors: to the first, the access was by the great staircase; and the first apartment was a kind of hall, which served as a place for the servants\*; in which was a cupboard †, where the silver plate was kept, of which one of the female servants had the key: on the

\* The French word is *office*; which means, either what we call a larder or pantry, or a butler's pantry.—It is or was usual to have the latter, which is here to be understood, in the entrance hall.

† *Armoire*; a press, as we should call it here.  
other

other side, a little room had been added, where Le Brun lay, when he did not pass the night with his family: the other room of this floor was that in which Madame Mazel was accustomed to receive company. A continuation of the same staircase led to the second floor; the first apartment of which was an antichamber, opening into another room, looking into the court of the house; next to which was the room where Madame Mazel slept. The first of these rooms was open at all times. When their mistress was gone to rest, the servant who attended her to undress her, was accustomed to put the key of the chamber upon a seat near the door \*, which she shut after

\* This, it must be remembered, is spoken of French locks, which are unlike ours; the door cannot be opened from without, but by the key.

her:

of a notary; but she had repeatedly said it was her intention to make another.

The house she inhabited was in rue Maçon, near the Sorbonne; and, as a minute description of it seemed necessary to the French relater, it must be repeated here.—The house had four floors: to the first, the access was by the great staircase; and the first apartment was a kind of hall, which served as a place for the servants\*; in which was a cupboard †, where the silver plate was kept, of which one of the female servants had the key: on the

\* The French word is *office*; which means, either what we call a larder or pantry, or a butler's pantry.—It is or was usual to have the latter, which is here to be understood, in the entrance hall.

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her:

her: they then locked the second door, and left the key on the chimney-piece of the third room, which remained open. Thus, in this large suite of rooms, (for they were very spacious) Madame Mazel was left entirely alone.

But in her bed-chamber were two other doors, one of which opened immediately from the alcove \*, in which the bed stood, to a little private stair-case; the other to a closet, which opened also to the stair-case. In the closet was a pres, the key of which was always put under the bolster of the bed; and in the pres was deposited the key of the strong box.

The third floor was empty, save only

\* In France it is called the ruelle; it is a kind of recess just big enough to hold a bed lengthways, and in it are frequently private doors, which go into other apartments.

that

that the Abbé Poulard sometimes occupied the apartment fitted up for him in it, which, by the narrow staircase before-mentioned, had a secret communication with the bed-chamber of Madame Mazel.

The fourth story had only two rooms occupied; one by the two footmen, who were brothers, and the other by the two waiting-women, who were sisters. The attic story consisted of a garret running the whole length of the house; where wood, coal, straw, and oats were sometimes deposited. A window in the roof opened to the ridge of the house, between which ran a gutter, that continued for four or five houses adjoining, most of which were lodging-houses. On the ground floor was the kitchen and a little wood room. The cook was accustomed to sleep in the

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kitchen ; but, about eight days before the fatal catastrophe, she took it into her head to remove her bed into the wood-room, which looked towards the street with a low window. The coachman lay in the stable, and the care of the court-yard was left to him ; the key of which always hung on a nail in the kitchen, whence the servants took it as they wanted it.

Some time before the death of Madame Mazel, she had taken a master-key from Le Brun, which opened all the doors, in order to accommodate with it the Abbé Poulard ; Le Brun had another, which he continued to use. To give an account of the house, and its inhabitants, seems necessary to the understanding the subsequent facts. Such minutiae as appear not material are omitted.

On

On the 27th November, 1698, being the first Sunday in Advent, the two daughters of Le Brun went in the afternoon to pay their respects to Madame Mazel. She received them with her usual good-humour, but desired they would come some other day, when they could pass longer time with her, as she was then going to vespers at the convent of Prémentré, rue Hautefeuille — for she was ever remarkably punctilious in the exercises of religion. She left her house, attended by Le Brun, on whose arm she leant, and the two footmen followed her. As soon as she was in the chapel Le Brun quitted her, and went to hear vespers himself at the Jacobins, rue St. Jacques; from thence he went to see a game at bowls, where he met a locksmith, called Laguë, who had married a servant

of Madame Mazel's; and they went together to a cook's shop, where they purchased some provisions, on which they intended to sup together; then Le Brun went home to his mistress's hotel, and from thence to his wife's lodging, and, at eight o'clock, he went with the coach, and the other footmen, to fetch his lady from the house of Madame Duvau, according to the orders she had given them; and after he had attended her home, he went to his appointment with Laguë.

Madame Mazel supped, according to her usual custom, with the Abbé Poulard, tête-à-tête. The servants, who waited at table, remarked, that he repeated several times his intention of going that night to his lodging in the neighbourhood, though he never before had mentioned what he intended to do  
of

of an evening. At eleven o'clock, Madame Mazel went to her chamber; and her two women had not quitted her, when Le Brun tapped at the back door of the room. She asked who it was? and one of the maids answered, it is Mr. Le Brun. Le Brun, finding the door not immediately opened, went down, and came round by the great stair-case to the other door. When he entered the apartment, Madame Mazel said to him, "Truly, this is a fine hour to come for orders!"— meaning that he had staid out later than was his custom; she then told him what she would have provided for supper the next evening, which was the night on which she kept open table. The maid, as was her usual method, put the key on the chair; after which they all quitted the room; and

Le Brun, who went last, drew the door after him and shut it. As they (the three servants) were going down together, Le Brun stopped the two young women, to tell them how kind his mistress had been to his daughters, when they waited on her in the afternoon, and after keeping them in conversation some minutes he wished them a good night ; the whole of his behaviour testifying his usual chearfulness and serenity.

He then went into the kitchen to take the key of the outward door to lock it ; he took it off the hook, but, finding himself cold, he laid it down on the table, while he warmed himself, and being fatigued, possibly too having drank more than he was accustomed to, he insenibly fell asleep. When he awoke he heard the clock strike one;

one; but knew not whether it was one o'clock, or the last stroke of twelve, or of any other hour. He ran up to lock the outward door (which he was surprised to find wide open), and, when he had done so, took the key with him into his room; a precaution he had seldom before taken. The next morning, being the 28th of November, he got up at the usual hour to buy provisions, and went to the butcher's. Going thither, he met a bookseller, a man of reputable character, who knew him, and with whom he talked some time, with the utmost ease and unconcern. To the butcher he said, that the meat must be sent directly, because it would be wanted for broth for his mistress.

He then went to make other purchases, and met two or three of his

G 4      acquaintances,

acquaintances, who walked with him home, and to whom he appeared remarkably chearful. As soon as they left him, he went down to give some orders in the kitchen, and gave the footmen wood for his mistress's apartment. It was by this time eight o'clock, and Madame Mazel usually arose at seven. The servants expressed to each other their wonder, that she had not rung her bell at her accustomed time. Le Brun went out a moment to see his wife; to whom he gave seven louis and some other money, which he bade her lock up. Then, returning home, he enquired if Madame was yet up? and being told she was not, he expressed surprize and uneasiness. That of the whole family now arose to such a height, that they determined to endeavour to awaken her, and for that purpose

purpose they went to the door, rapped loudly, and called. But all was silent. They were then persuaded, that, if she were living, she must have heard them, and their trouble encreased. Some said she had fallen into an apoplexy; others, that a bleeding at the nose, to which she was subject, had destroyed her; but Le Brun remarked, that it must be something worse,—“ Some-“ thing,” said he, “ is wrong; I am “ very uneasy, because I found the “ street-door open last night.”

They now determined to send for her eldest son, Monsieur de Savonnieres; who, as soon as he came to the house, sent for a locksmith to open the door: while this was doing, he said to Le Brun, —“ What can this mean?” — whereupon somebody again observed, that it must be an apoplectic fit, and that

that it would be necessary to have a surgeon at hand; on which Le Brun again said, — “ Oh, no! no! — It is “ something yet worse. I am sure “ there has been mischief, when I re- “ member that the door was wide open “ last night.”

The room being at length opened, the people who were assembled entered: Le Brun went hastily to his mistress's bed; — she was assassinated, and bathed in blood. He ran to the window of the closet, which he unbarred, then lifting up the strong box, he cried — “ but there is nothing taken from “ hence — what can this mean?” — Monsieur de Savonnieres sent for the Lieutenant Criminal Deffita, the same who formed the hasty judgment against the unhappy d'Anglade. He laid a complaint in his own name, and that of

his two brothers; and surgeons were sent for to examine the body of the deceased.

Above fifty small wounds, made with a knife, were found on her hands, face, shoulders, and throat; and these last, having occasioned a great effusion of blood, had been the occasion of her death; for none of the wounds were of themselves mortal.

In the bed was found a piece of a lace neckcloth, and a towel twisted up in form of a night-cap; which towel belonged to the house, and was marked with an S.

The cords of the bells were twisted up above the reach of the hand, and tied to the curtain rod. In the ashes was found a knife, seven or eight inches long, the handle of which had been of tortoise-shell, but was nearly burnt. The key of the chamber-door  
was

was not found on the seat, where the waiting woman affirmed she had put it; no door was broke; and the two doors, which opened to the back-stairs, were both shut and hooked within-side. The key of the press was found under the bolster, where it was always placed: on opening this press, the purse, in which Madame Mazel kept her card money, was found, containing about two hundred and seventy-eight livres, in gold. The key of the strong box was in the same place: they tried to open the strong box with it, but could not, without the assistance of a lock-smith, who was near a quarter of an hour before he could accomplish it: in it were found four sacks, each containing a thousand livres; and many other bags, containing different sums; one of which was labelled, “ This is the property

property of the Abbé Poulard." Under one of the sacks was an \* orange-coloured and green purse, lined with crimson sattin, which was empty, and turned inside out; and a red leather writing box, on which lay half a louis, and which contained all the jewels of Madame Mazel, to the value of fifteen thousand livres. In her pocket were eighteen pistoles, in gold.—From all which circumstances, it appeared as if those who had committed the cruel deed, had done it from some other motive than merely that of robbery.

The Lieutenant Criminal questioned the two women who attended on Madame Mazel; who related to him, succinctly, what had passed the night be-

\* This is a specimen, among many others, of the trifling and minute description which pervades every French narrative.

fore:

fore. Le Brun was next called upon; who gave, with equal clearness, an account of every thing that had happened to himself, from the time of his going out with his mistress to vespers, to the moment of his examination. He was searched; and there was found on him the key of the hall, where his pantry was; and a master-key with very large wards, which, on trial, was found to open the door of Madame Mazel's chamber: upon which the Lieutenant criminal ordered him into custody. — On putting on the napkin, it was found too little for his head: they examined his hands, but there were no signs of blood upon them, or his cloaths; nor was there, on any part of his person, any marks of that resistance, which it was very evident the unfortunate victim had made against the ruffian who had killed

killed her; some of whose hair she had torn off, and held in her hand. After a very slight search in his pantry, nothing was found that indicated his guilt; notwithstanding which, he was sent to prison, and his wife at the same time ordered into custody. The magistrate then retired, having put his seal on the doors, and left his officers in the house.

The next day the Lieutenant returned again to the house of the deceased, to examine the cook, the two footmen, and the coachman; but, though he employed ten hours in these interrogations, he omitted to examine an old woman\* who lay in the kitchen.

There was found at the bottom of the back stairs, a new rope, tied to an iron

\* And who is not mentioned before among the inhabitants of the house.

hook,

hook, and knotted as if it was designed for a ladder. Le Brun was again examined in prison, and neither on his person, or in his answers, was there found the least cause to believe him the guilty person. His pantry was again searched: they found only a basket, containing some old iron; among which was a hook, and a file; a towel belonging to the house, marked S, and some cords.

— They then examined the lodging of his wife, where nothing was found that tended to criminate him; however, they seized on his linen, to compare it with a shirt, which was found stained with blood in the garret, hid under some straw (and which evidently belonged to the assassin) and with the lace neckcloth before mentioned.

The two women declared, that this neckcloth never had belonged to Le  
Brun;

Brun, but said, they remembered having washed it for a servant called Berry who had been dismissed from the service of Madame Mazel about four months before, because he was detected in robbing her. No similitude was found between the shirt and those belonging to Le Brun; nor in any enquiry that was made, did the slightest circumstance arise, that tended to fix the charge on him. The poor man was, however, in the mean time, closely confined, and not suffered to see his wife, his children, or his friends; while the Abbé Poulard, who during his first examination had fainted, and appeared under the utmost agitation of spirit, went to every place, exclaiming, that Le Brun only could be guilty: and he made the same declaration before the judges, though he

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brought no proof of it. In default, however, of proof, he invented a story, which he thought would prejudice the public against the unhappy Le Brun: —he said, that “ Madame Mazel had, in her youth, a connection with a nobleman of high rank, by whom she had a son; which son was that very Berry, who had been some months before discharged for theft: that Madame Mazel had been entrusted, by her paramour, with a very large sum of money, for the use of this son; which secret was known only to Le Brun; who, in hopes of engaging him to marry one of his daughters, had communicated the mystery of his birth, and of this deposit of money, to Berry; and Berry, thereupon, with the concurrence and assistance of Le Brun, had gone to his mother, Madame Mazel, to beseech a restitu-

a restitution, or a provision; but that the inhuman mother, instead of granting his request, had seized, and attempted to strangle him; which obliged him, in his own defence, to give her the blows which occasioned her death."

—Though this account, which the Abbé pretended to have had from Le Brun, directly charged Berry with the murder; and though the neckcloth was found, which was known to be his, no enquiry was made after him, and the prosecution was still continued against Le Brun.—The story of the relationship between the deceased and Berry, was clearly false; as his parents were known to be both living at Bourges: and, on Le Brun's being interrogated, as to the truth of this story, he was so far from throwing on the memory of his deceased mistress

any part of the infamy imputed to her, that he spoke of her with the greatest respect; particularly, when he was questioned on the communication between her apartment and that of the Abbé Poulard, he answered, that he should not answer questions which had nothing to do with the subject of his examination; and that he would say nothing that might give a pretence for scandal.

On the fourteenth of January, Monsieur de Savonneres presented a request to the Lieutenant Criminal, in his own name, and that of his two brothers, demanding that Le Brun should be declared duly convicted of having assassinated Madame Mazel, and of having robbed her of a quantity of gold coin that was in her strong box: and that he should, at the same time, be deprived of, and declared unworthy of

of the legacy left him by the deceased.—However strange and incredible it may seem, it appears very certain, that this legacy was the real source of all the enmity of the Messrs. de Savonneres against the unfortunate Le Brun: and, to deprive him and his children of it, they prosecuted him even to death; while those, whom there was every reason to believe the real perpetrators of the crime, were not even enquired after.

When the trial came on, the principal arguments used by the counsel against Le Brun, were these \*:—That, as none of the doors were broken open, the person who obtained access to the apartment of Madame Mazel must be a servant in the house; and that servant could be only Le Brun, who

\* Pleadings against Le Brun.

alone possessed a key that opened the doors:—that nobody, but a person well acquainted with the usages of Madame Mazel, could know where to find, under the bolster, the key of the press, in which was shut the key of the strong box, so as to be able to take it out and replace it. Such knowledge could be acquired only by long observation of the customs of a family; and could be certainly known to nobody so well as to Le Brun. He only could have tied up the bell-ropes; because nobody else could procure admittance to the room, while Madame Mazel was absent, but Le Brun, by means of his master-key. To add to the strength of this remark, it was added, that once before, when Madame Mazel complained that her bell-cords were tied up so high that she could not reach them;

them; Le Brun answered, that he had tied them up, because they were in his way when he made the bed, and that he afterwards forgot them: from whence it was inferred, that what he had done once, he might have repeated.— The Counsel urged, that it was impossible to believe, that, in the short interval during which Le Brun declared he had been asleep in the kitchen, a stranger should be able to find his way into the house, open the doors, and, though Madame Mazel was but just in bed, and probably not asleep, should assassinate her, notwithstanding the resistance she evidently made; force her strong box, which was so difficult to unlock; pass afterwards close to the door of the room where the two women lay, who were but just gone to

H 4 bed;

bed; and escape by the street-door, before Le Brun awoke; that a stranger should do it was impossible; but nothing was easier to Le Brun. Alone in the house, after every one else was retired; master of a key which procured him admittance, and of the light which was necessary for his purpose; every thing conspired, they declared, to fix the guilt on him only.

\* Monsieur d'Aucour, who was employed in favour of Le Brun, made an excellent, though fruitless defence.—He began with shewing, how improbable it was, that a man of so excellent a character as Le Brun universally bore; a man who had brought up a large family in honest and sober principles; whose conduct, as a husband

• Pleadings on behalf of Le Brun.

and

and a father, was unimpeached ; and who had faithfully served his mistress nine-and-twenty years ; should now, without motive, without provocation, become the murderer of her, to whom he had so long shewn the sincerest attachment and respect : these circumstances made the fact extremely improbable. The next point was to shew, that it was impossible Le Brun could be guilty of it. The report of those who inspected the body of the deceased, said, that she had received above fifty wounds, and had evidently made great resistance ; in consequence of which, the assassin must have borne on his person many marks of that resistance. Le Brun had none ; not even the smallest scratch on his hands, or spot of blood on his cloaths :—the towel, twisted up like a cap, was so

much less than his head, that he could not put it on :—the knife was not his; had never been seen in his possession:—the neckcloth was known to belong to another person :—the shirt was not like any he possessed; it was unlike, not only in quality, but in size; and was made for a little man, whereas Le Brun was very tall and robust.—These facts, said M. d'Aucour, are so evident, that the accusers of my client cannot deny them: forced, therefore, to acknowledge that he cannot have been the actual perpetrator of the crime, they have recourse to another charge; and accuse him of being an accomplice. But this charge, continued M. d'Aucour, is even more absurd than the other. If any unaccountable frenzy could have instigated Le Brun to such a deed, he would

would not have trusted the execution of it to another hand : if he had been prompted by avarice, he would, as he had time enough, have secured the large sum, in money and jewels, which were left behind, and not have contented himself with a small part only of what he had risqued so much to obtain. He would certainly have escaped before the next morning, instead of going, as he did, unconcernedly about his usual business.—But if any domestic let in the ruffian, why must it be Le Brun ? Why not one of the other footmen, or maids ? Why not the coachman, in whose care the court-yard was left ? Why not the cook, who had also a master-key to the outward door, and in whose room was a low window, communicating with the street, through which she might give the master-key out ?

out? Finally, Why might it not be the Abbé Poulard, whose character was such as made him be supposed a much more likely man than Le Brun to commit an infamous crime.— But why must it be concluded, that the assassin was let in at all? Of a house open at all times to gamesters of both sexes, and to crowds of servants who attended them, it is not difficult to know the entrance, and the passages. Might not the wretch, who meditated murder and robbery, conceal himself in the house during the day, when all the doors were open to all comers? Might he not have remained there one night, or even more, hid among the straw, coals, and wood, in the garret, which was rarely frequented? Might he not even have come in by means of the trap-door, which opened

in the roof, and which was never shut ? And was there not sufficient temptation to villainy, in a house which was known to have a hoard of gold never less than two thousand pistoles, besides other monies ; and which was so easy of access ?— There being, therefore, every reason to believe the crime was not committed by the intervention of a servant ; or, if of a servant, not of Le Brun ; M. d'Aucour demanded, on behalf of his client, that he might be declared innocent, and set at liberty.

But, notwithstanding this able defence, and that his adversaries could bring no one proof against him, no one presumptive evidence, the fatal key in his possession, which opened all the doors, determined the judges to condemn him. A yet more powerful motive,

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motive, perhaps, was, the wish of the Messieurs de Savonnieres to have him condemned! They therefore proceeded, on the eighteenth of January, to judgment.—Eleven judges were assembled: of whom two declared, they required farther information before they decided; two voted that he might be put to the question\*; six condemned him to death, and that in the most cruel manner that could be devised.

Poor Le Brun was extremely beloved; and the murmurs and complaints of the people, who all believed him innocent, reached the ears of the judges. They said, in their defence, that as they knew their decision would not be final, but would be appealed against, and carried to another court,

\* By torture.

they

they determined to make it as severe as possible, in hopes of frightening the prisoner into a confession of the actual perpetrator of the crime, and all its circumstances. Thus, instead of justice, these men had recourse to stratagem.—Le Brun appealed\*; and M. d'Aucour, on the second hearing, undertook his defence anew.

He again urged all that he had before set forth, on behalf of his oppressed client; and set all the improbabilities, he had before remarked, in a yet stronger light. He represented, that no one circumstance could be alledged against him, but the possession of a key which turned half round the lock of the apartment

\* But to what court, Monsieur Richer forgets to tell us.—The court of the Chatelet was that wherein Le Brun was first condemned.

where

where Madame Mazel lay : and on such slight presumption they condemned to die, by the most cruel torments, a man who, for five-and-forty years (of which twenty-nine had been passed in the same service), had never been accused of the least offence against God or man ! The fatal key, which is thus to bring him to the scaffold, not only was not surreptitiously obtained, but had undergone no alteration to enable it to turn the lock entirely ; a precaution Le Brun must have taken, had he meant to have used it to enter his mistress's room, after she was in bed ; for then the door was double locked, and this key, which would only turn once, was consequently unfit for the purpose. It was objected, by the accusers of Le Brun, that he he ought not to have kept this key ; for that Madame Mazel,

Mazel, after being robbed by Berry, had taken away the master-keys from all her servants who possessed them. It is true, continues M. d'Aucour, she did, in a fit of vexation, very natural, yet not very reasonable, take away from the cook, and from Le Brun, their master-keys. But she soon after gave back to the cook that which she had taken from her; and, as she had given that which Le Brun used to carry to the Abbé Poulard, she suffered him (Le Brun) to use that he had by him, and which had been given him many years before, by a servant who married out of the family; and Le Brun always did use it, not only with the knowledge of all the other domestics, but of his mistress herself; indeed it was absolutely necessary for him, as he bought all the provisions for the family, and

was obliged to be at market in a morning long before the rest of the family were stirring.

Besides, had Le Brun lent the key to the assassin, he would not have taken it back. He would have suffered him to have kept it, or have thrown it away, under pretence that he had himself lost it. It is inconceivable that he would retain what would be brought in evidence against him.

But why, pursued M. d'Aucour, is not enquiry made after Berry? Berry, who before robbed Madame Mazel, and was dismissed in disgrace; who was known to be an infamous wretch, capable of any mischief — to whom the neckcloth was known to belong; who had often applied to be admitted to his place again, but had been refused; who was seen at Paris about

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the time the event happened ; and had been seen since with money, which could not have been honestly obtained ?

Why is no notice taken of the Abbé Poulard, an equivocal character at best ; a priest, who, after being in two orders, actually belongs to none ? — who had access at all hours to the house of Madame Mazel, and who was seen to go in at midnight, the evening the murder was committed ; and who had an interest in the death of his benefactress, who was an obstacle to the marriage of his sister with her second son ? — Why does the wife of the eldest son, whose inveterate hatred and frequent denunciations of vengeance against her mother-in-law were well known — why is she not suspected of having hired an assassin, to put an end to a life so obnoxious to her ? — Any

one of these persons, M. d'Aucour affirmed, were much more likely to be the perpetrators of the homicide than Le Brun, whose interest it was that his mistress should live, not only because he enjoyed an excellent place, but because if she did alter her will, as she sometimes said she should, he had no reason to believe she would lessen his legacy, but rather to hope she would encrease it; as she was continually bestowing additional favours on him and his family, and, as she advanced in years, felt herself more and more attached to an old servant, careful of her interest, and whose services she found every day more necessary, in her domestic arragement.

When all these reasons were added to the universal good character of the accused, the concern expressed by all ranks

ranks of people for him (for all believed him innocent), and the total want of proof against him, M. d'Aucour pleaded, that, so far from the sentence being confirmed, it undoubtedly ought to be annulled. He again, before he concluded, pointed out to the court the extraordinary conduct of the Abbé Poulard, who, with an officiousness very unjustifiable, had laboured, by falsities, and injurious allegations, to throw the guilt on the unfortunate prisoner. — But the Abbé Poulard was not a second time questioned, till it was too late.

The counsel on the other side laid the greatest stress on the circumstance of the key; on what Le Brun said, when questioned by M. de Savonieres, “This is not apoplexy, but “something worse;” and on the seven

louis given to his wife to lock up, which they pretended to believe was part of the money taken from Madame Mazel.

On the twenty-second of February, sentence was again to be passed by twenty-two judges. Two only of the number demanded farther enquiry; the other twenty decided for the question ordinary and extraordinary.

The unhappy man was put to this dreadful trial, and, amid the most cruel tortures, persisted in declaring his innocence.

As he continued steadfastly to deny the fact, a new sentence became necessary. On the 27th, the same number of judges being again assembled, two voted that he should be sent to the gallies for life; all the rest voted for a farther enquiry of twelve months against

against Le Brun and his wife, during which he was to remain in prison, and his wife to be at liberty. A right was retained to sentence his loss of the legacy, or afterwards to decide upon it as occasion might require.

In consequence of this last judgment, Le Brun, who had till now been kept in a dungeon, without being suffered to speak to or see any human being, but the jailer, was allowed to have his wife, his children, and his friends admitted. But this alleviation of his misery came too late. The violence of the torments he had undergone was such, that he was reduced to extremity, though a very athletic and healthy man of forty-five, and his wretched wife had only time to procure him the administration of the sacraments. As he received them, he again most solemnly protested his innocence, and expired, amidst the

despair of his wife and children, and the regret of all who had ever known him. Such was the grief universally expressed by all ranks of people, and such the concourse who attended his corpse to the grave, that it seemed to become a public cause, even before the real culprit was discovered. What then must have been the feelings of his prosecutors and his judges (if indeed they had any feeling) when the monster, who had really committed the crime, for which this innocent worthy man suffered, was dragged forth!

Information was (by what means is not said) given to the Lieutenant of the Marechaussée of Sens, that a man named Gérlat, otherwise Berry \*, had established

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established himself there as a dealer in horses, and without any visible means by which he could acquire money to support such a traffic.

In consequence of which, in March 1690, he was arrested. He offered the men, who were sent to take him, a purse full of louis d'ors to let him escape — and upon him was found a watch, which was known immediately to have belonged to Madame Mazel.

A process was instantly set on foot against him, and witnesses examined. Some swore they had seen him at Paris at the time of the assassination; which he absolutely denied. A woman swore she saw him come out of the house after midnight, on the night it was

the province to which they belong, as Picardy Champaigne; at other times, of mere fancy, as La Pierre, La Tour, La Fleur, &c.

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committed: a barber deposed, that he had shaved him the next day, and, having observed scratches and wounds on his hands, Berry had told him, that they were made by a cat, which he had attempted to kill. The shirt and the neckcloth were proved to be his, by comparing them with what he had found upon him.

The process went on with great celerity; and, among other arrests, one issued, directing the prisoner to be confronted with the Abbé Poulard — which was done; but what passed, or what afterwards became of the Abbé, Monsieur Richer says, he was never able to learn. Probably he was ordered into perpetual confinement, in one of the religious houses from which he had deserted: certain it is that all traces are lost of this apostate priest.

Barry

Barry was put to the question; when he said, that, by orders of Madame de Savonnieres, wife to the eldest son of Madame Mazel, Le Brun and himself had destroyed her, by agreement with each other. He hoped by this falsehood to associate Madame de Savonnieres in his guilt, and by that means gain time; but when he found this falsehood useless, he confessed, that he concealed himself in the garret of the house (having found all the doors open) from the Friday to the Sunday, feeding on bread and apples, he had put into his pocket: —that at eleven o'clock on Sunday morning, knowing it was the hour Madame Mazel went to mass, he went down into her chamber, which he found open: —that he tried to hide himself under the bed; but could not get under with his coat on, which obliged

obliged him to ascend again to the garret, where he left his coat and waistcoat, and came back in his shirt only, when he crept under the bed, where he lay some time:—that after dinner, Madame Mazel being gone to vespers, he got up from under the bed, warmed himself at the fire, and, finding his hat troublesome, made himself a night-cap of a towel he found behind the glass; that he tied up the bell-cords, and staid at the fire till he heard the coach enter the court-yard; then getting again under the bed, remained there till Madame Mazel had been in bed near an hour; then he shewed himself, and asked her for her money, when on her screaming out, he told her, if she cried out he would kill her; and upon her still continuing to do so, and to attempt ringing the bells, he struck

her with a knife ; that she tried to defend herself for some little time, but her strength failing, he continued to strike her till she died :—that he then lighted a candle, and took from the bolster the key of the press, from whence he took that of the strong box, which he opened, without any difficulty, and took all the gold there was, which amounted to about six thousand livres, which he put into a canvas bag that he found in the box :—that he placed the key where it was before, and, it being then moon-light, he took his hat, and leaving the towel and his neckcloth he knew not where, he ascended to the garret, where he took off his shirt, and putting on his coat and waistcoat, went down to the street-door, but that he drew the door of

Madame

Madame Mazel's room after him with the key, as gently as he could, and, when he got into the street, by being so lucky as to find the street-door unlocked, he threw the key of the chamber away:—that he had taken a rope-ladder with him, by which he meant to have escaped from the windows of the first story, if he had found the door locked; which ladder he left at the foot of the stairs.

The confession of this wretch, entirely clears up those circumstances that appeared extraordinary, and wholly exculpates the memory of the unfortunate Le Brun; whose wife and children appear to have received no compensation for the cruel injury done them, and the entire ruin that overwhelmed them. Berry died on the wheel;

wheel; and the memory of Le Brun was declared free from any stain:—but the evil of having given up an innocent man to torture and death, could not be repaired.

MADEMOISELLE

## MADEMOISELLE DE CHOISEUL.

**A**UGUSTUS de Choiseul, fourth son of Cesar Duc de Choiseul, became by the death of his elder brothers (and of a son which one of them had left) Duc de Choiseul. He married Louisa Gabrielle de la Baume le Blanc de la Vallière, whose elder brother, Charles Francis, was Duc de la Vallière; the youngest, Maximilian Henry, Chevalier de la Vallière; and her sister, Maria Jolanda de la Vallière, who was first married to the Marquis de Broffay, and afterwards to the Count of Tournon. The celebrated Madame de la Vallière, mistress of Louis the fourteenth, was the aunt of this family; and consequently

consequently they were cousins to the natural daughter of that monarch, Maria Anne de Bourbon, Princess of Conti.

The Duke and Dutchess of Choiseul, though not divorced, lived in separate houses, and very seldom saw each other. When France was treating of peace with the Duke of Savoy, the Duke de Choiseul was sent to Savoy as one of the hostages for its ratification ; his journey thither took place in September 1696, and he returned to Paris in January 1697.

The issue of his first marriage were supposed to be, a daughter, born in 1683 (whose education was entrusted to her aunt, the Abbess de Sauvoir) ; a son, born in 1688, who died at two years old ; and a second daughter, born in 1692, who was also put under the care of her aunt the abbess.

The Dukes de Choiseul died of a rapid decline, in 1698, at the age of thirty-three; the Duke married a second wife, by whom he had no children; and died in 1704, at the age of sixty-eight.

He appears to have been a negligent and improvident father, having taken very little notice of his children while he lived, and dissipated great part of the property they ought to have possessed at his death.—When that event happened, his family and that of his first wife met, to consider of the affairs of the two young ladies his daughters, as two only were then believed to exist. Their estates and persons were put under the guardianship of their maternal uncle, the Duke de la Vallière; and in every proceeding which the entangled state of

their father's affairs made necessary, no mention was made of more than two daughters. To them also was bequeathed a part of the fortune of their grandmother, the Marchioness de la Vallière, without any notice being taken of a third sister.

In 1708, the eldest of the Demoiselles de Choiseul became of age; and in the acts passed on that occasion there was mention of only one sister: two years after which she fell into a decline, and died, leaving a will, in which she named her sister, Maria-Louisa-Theresa de Choiseul, her sole legatee; who consequently became, as was then imagined, sole heiress to the house of De Choiseul. The King, who at the entreaty of his daughter, the Princess of Conti, had granted a pension to the two young ladies jointly,

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to make them some amends for the dissipation of their father, now gave the whole to the survivor; and in the course of a few years she received payment of many legacies, and took possession of several inheritances, as only daughter of the Duke de Choiseul; these her guardians possessed in her behalf till she came of age, which happened in 1720; in the course of which year she also grew consumptive, and died: the Duke de la Vallière, and the Chevalier de la Vallière, her uncles, were her heirs; they possessed themselves of her estates and properties, of which they retained the possession till 1723.

Then it was that the lieutenant criminal received a complaint from a young person, calling herself De Choiseul, who said that she was the daughter and

and now sole heiress of Augustus Duke de Choiseul, and Louisa Gabriella de la Beaume le Blanc de la Vallière, his wife. This young lady had been brought up by the Marchioness d'Hautefort, and had been always known by the name of Mademoiselle de St. Cyr, from one of the estates belonging to Madame d'Hautefort.

In this complaint she set forth, that she was the daughter of the Dutches of Choiseul, born the 8th October 1697 ;—that the Duke her father knew of the pregnancy and delivery of the Dutches ; and that, at the request of both her parents, Madame de Hautefort had received her into her care ; to which the Dutches de Choiseul had, on her death-bed, again most earnestly recommended her, seeing, too evidently, that the Duke totally neglected his children, and fear-

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ing for the fate of her youngest daughter, then in her earliest infancy ;—that she had always been acknowledged and openly treated as their daughter by both her parents :—she therefore demanded to be restored to her rights, as heiress to the Duke de Choiseul.—On this plea she was allowed to commence a suit ; and witnesses being heard, there appeared sufficient reason to believe that the plaintiff was really born of the Duchess de Choiseul. To institute however a regular suit two things were necessary—an extract of the register of baptism, and an adverse party.

The first of these was found by means of causing herself to be baptised by the name of Augustina-Frances de Choiseul ; and, as the Duke her father had been remarkably negligent in regard to the baptism of his other daughters.

(who

(who were not baptised till one was eleven, and the other two years old) it was not improbable that the same inattention had prevailed in regard to his youngest daughter.

After some measures had been taken, peculiar to the French law, Mademoiselle de Choiseul (as she was now called) summoned the Duke de la Vallière to give her an inventory of the fortune and effects of Madame de la Vallière, her maternal grandmother, and to make restitution of the effects they possessed as heirs to her mother, the Dutchesse de Choiseul.

The Duke de la Vallière, in his defence, said, that the person calling herself Augustina-Frances de Choiseul must establish by authentic proofs her claim to that name, and to her title of Heiress of the Duke de Choiseul.

As the Duke de la Vallière could be sued only as a peer of France, the cause was to be heard before the chamber of peers.

Before that tribunal then was brought the cause; when counsel on behalf of Mademoiselle de Choiseul pleaded \*,  
 " That the Duke de la Vallière had  
 " been a witness to the birth of their  
 " client; that he had promised his  
 " sister, the Dutchesf de Choiseul, to  
 " take care of her infant through every  
 " circumstance of her life: but when  
 " he found that, by suppressing what  
 " he knew of her birth, he should di-  
 " vide considerable property as heir to  
 " that sister, he scrupled not to vio-  
 " late every promise he had given her,  
 " not only on the birth of her child,

\* Pleadings on behalf of Augustina-Frances, calling herself de Choiseul.

" but

“ but again when she was dying ; and  
“ now, when her daughter claimed her  
“ own property, desired to have au-  
“ thentic proof of what he knew better  
“ than any one—proofs, which it was  
“ the more difficult for her to bring,  
“ as all the family papers were in the  
“ hands of the very person who de-  
“ manded them, and whose interest it  
“ was to conceal every memorial of  
“ the contested fact.”—If, said they,  
the Duke de la Vallière has done this,  
he is certainly liable to the prosecution  
of Mademoiselle de Choiseul ; if he  
has not done it, she is guilty of a false  
and injurious accusation, and must  
submit to the punishment that follows  
such an offence.

The Duke de la Vallière, in his de-  
fence, said \*, “ That he was not guilty

\* Defence of the Duke de la Vallière.

“ of

“ of suppressing the claim of his op-  
“ ponent;—for how could he suppress  
“ what never existed? In all the pa-  
“ pers relative to transactions in the  
“ family, before the death of the Duke  
“ de Choiseul, who survived his wife  
“ seven years, there was no mention  
“ of a third daughter; and what proofs  
“ of another nature could he have  
“ concealed, when none were ever pre-  
“ tended to have been known?—nei-  
“ ther baptismal register, or any other  
“ evidence of her ever having been  
“ acknowledged the daughter of the  
“ Duke and Duchess de Choiseul.”  
“ But,” continued the counsel for the  
Duke de la Vallière, “ who will say  
“ that the Duke suppressed the claims  
“ of a daughter, who was never owned  
“ by her father? While *he* lived, the  
“ Duke de la Vallière had nothing to  
“ do

“ do with the fortune of the Choiseul  
“ family; and when he died, how is it  
“ possible that the Duke de la Vallière  
“ could foresee that the two daughters  
“ he left would both die unmarried,  
“ one at the age of twenty-seven, and  
“ the other at twenty-eight? Unless  
“ he *had* foreseen that by these impro-  
“ bable events he should possess his  
“ niece’s property, it could not be  
“ worth his while, by unjustifiable and  
“ dishonourable means, to throw into  
“ obscurity the birth of a third daugh-  
“ ter of his sister. The Marchioness  
“ de Hautefort pretended, that the  
“ Duchess de Choiseul, when in her  
“ last sickness, conjured her by their  
“ long friendship to take care of her  
“ infant daughter, whom her death  
“ would leave to the mercy of a fa-  
“ ther who shewed the most cruel in-  
“ difference

“ difference to all his children. If this  
“ was the case, why did the Marchio-  
“ nes de Hautefort give her another  
“ name? Why did she suffer so many  
“ acts to be passed in which the name  
“ of her ward was entirely omitted?  
“ Why did she not present her to her  
“ grandmother, her relations, her fa-  
“ ther? Why not baptise her as a  
“ daughter of the Duke de Choiseul?  
“ Why not appeal to public justice to  
“ ascertain her birth, if there appeared  
“ any backwardness in her family to  
“ acknowledge her, or if any circum-  
“ stances attended it which might  
“ make her legitimacy liable to be  
“ disputed?”—These seem to be the  
strongest points urged in defence of  
the Duke de la Vallière.—The facts  
asserted on behalf of Mademoiselle de  
Choiseul, and of which facts she de-  
fired

sired leave to bring proof, were the following \*, “ That the Dutchesse de “ Choiseul, whose pregnancy was known “ to all her husband’s family and her “ own, was, on the 8th of October “ 1697, delivered of a daughter, in a “ house belonging to her and the Duke, “ rue de Verneuil, faubourg St. “ Germain, and while she lay-in re- “ ceived the complimentary visits of “ all the family;—that as soon as the “ infant was born, the accoucheur, “ apprehending it was likely to die, “ had sprinkled it, in the usual form “ appointed in such cases;—that soon “ afterwards Madame de Choiseul fell “ into a declining state of health, and “ feeling herself in danger, recom- “ mended her third daughter most

\* Proofs offered to be brought by Mademoi-  
selle de Choiseul.

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“ of her friend, Madame d'Hautefort,  
“ and to that of her brother, the Duke  
“ de la Vallière ; and that she gave to  
“ the former two pictures of herself,  
“ and some other effects, which she  
“ besought her to give to her youngest  
“ daughter, that she might have some  
“ memorial of her mother ; and that  
“ when the Dutchess was dead, Ma-  
“ dame d'Hautefort took the child  
“ from the village of Meudon, where  
“ she was at nurse, and put her together  
“ with her nurse, into lodgings, rue  
“ St. Antoine, where the Duke de la  
“ Vallière often visited her ; from  
“ thence she was removed to the house  
“ of one LaSalle, rue Princesse, that  
“ she might be more immediately un-  
“ der the eye of Madame d'Hautefort,  
“ where the Duke continued to see her,  
“ and

“ and whither he sometimes came, accompanied by Madame d'Hautefort and La Comme, a woman who had for many years been a faithful and favoured servant of the Ducheſſ de Choifeul; and the Duke de la Vallière frequently made little presents to the nurse, to encourage her to take care of the infant.

“ That at the age of two years and a half, Madame d'Hautefort brought the little De Choiseul home to her own house, where she lived till the commencement of the suit, and where the Duke de la Vallière, her uncle, continued to see and to acknowledge her as his niece; and though she was usually known by the name of Mademoiselle St. Cyr, yet she was allowed to have a claim to that of De Choiseul.”

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The counsel related the names and abodes of the various nurses under whose care the infant was at different times placed ; and of her governess, who was particularly charged with her education, under the direction of Madame d'Hautefort ; and lastly offered to prove, that the Duke de la Vallière had acknowledged repeatedly, that the little girl, of whom Madame d'Hautefort had the care, was the daughter of his sister, the Dutchesse de Choiseul.

To add strength to this allegation, a letter was produced, written by the Marchioness de Tournon to the Marchioness d'Hautefort, which contained these words : “ I am very sorry, Madam, that the ill health of Mademoiselle de St. Cyr prevents my seeing you, as I have nothing more at heart than to assure you of my gratitude.

“ titude. I wish nothing more ardently than to see the affair you know of brought to a conclusion ; it is certainly that which affects the health of our amiable songstresses.—My friend, of whom I have an high opinion (whom you saw with me on Sunday, and who left me on your entrance, believing we had business) told me yesterday, that he wished very much to see you here, to give you his opinion of the business, in which he sees no difficulty ; but in the management of which, able persons are absolutely necessary, and such he will name to you. Consider, therefore, whether, to-morrow, Saturday, or Sunday, you cannot give me an hour of your time after dinner, as he will meet you here on receiving notice ; and, as I have received the vi-

“ fits of all my relations, we shall not  
“ be interrupted.

“ I hope the child will be well; if  
“ not, she must come sick.—I shall be  
“ charmed with this opportunity of  
“ conversing with you, and of assur-  
“ ing you of my tender attachment.  
“ Suffer me to conclude without ei-  
“ ther compliment or signature.”

By this letter it clearly appears, that the amiable songstress, the child, and Mademoiselle St. Cyr, spoken of in it, are the same person; and that Madame de Tournon then acknowledged her to be her sister's child, and even intended to assist in restoring her to the rank to which she had a right.

Mademoiselle de Choiseul having now collected, by her lawyers, a body of evidence which appeared very strong, was advised to proceed against the Duke

de

de la Vallière, the Chevalier, and Madame de Tournon, together; otherwise she might, after having succeeded against one, be liable to the same difficulties with the other two.—They were summoned to appear, and to be examined. The Duke was first questioned; his answers were evasive, and it seemed that he suffered a struggle between the truth he knew, and the falsehood it was his interest to maintain. The Countess de Tournon absolutely denied every thing; but when the letter above recited was read to her, she appeared hurt and confused; yet persisted in affirming, that the letter did not relate to Mademoiselle St. Cyr.

The Chevalier de la Vallière, on the contrary, honestly told all he knew; and from his account, Mademoiselle

de Choiseul gained an advantage, that all the efforts of the Duke could not counteract.

Thus provided, this young person, hitherto appearing as a private gentlewoman, depending on the bounty of Madame d'Hautefort, prepared to bring that suit to an issue, which was to raise her to an exalted rank, and to restore to her the possessions of one of the most illustrious houses in France.

But before she had proceeded far, an unexpected discovery threw new light on the obscurity of her birth; she was told that one Leduc had in his possession a register, which had for a great length of time been kept by his father (who had been dead ten years); and that as he (the elder) had attended the Dutches of Choiseul, it was probable

bable that whatever related to the birth of her youngest daughter would be found entered in this book.

Her lawyers therefore summoned Leduc, who the next morning appeared before Jourdain, a notary employed in the affair : he produced the book, in which his father had carefully minuted the times of his various attendance, the money he received, and every other circumstance that occurred in his practice. There was found a detail of his first visit to Madame de Choiseul, of his having afterwards bled her ; and at length, that on the 7th of October, 1697, he was sent for to her at six o'clock in the evening, when he found her in labour, and who, between the hours of two and three the next morning, was delivered of a fine girl ; which infant was entrusted to him to be put

out to nurse ; and which, on the 11th of October following, he carried to Meudon, having first made a slight rasure of the skin under the right ham, and again a little lower on the leg, which he rubbed with gunpowder : a method which makes a mark that never can be effaced.—These marks, Mad<sup>me</sup> de Choiseul bore.—Leduc then mentioned in his book, “ that he had carried the infant to St. Etienne du Mont to be baptised, where she had received the name of Julia ;” but without speaking of her parents, god-father or godmother. His journal also contains an account of money received and expended ; among other articles, that he paid four livres ten sous for the coach that carried him with the child to Meudon ;—that he received various sums, at times, for the maintenance

nance of the child ; and, among others, was a memorandum, that he was paid thirty new louis for his attendance, by the *Marshaleſſ de Choiseul* ; a name which occasioned the adverse party to assert, that the whole transaction did not allude to the Dutchesſ de Choiseul, but to ſome other woman of fashion bearing the name of DeChoiseul. (There were then five or ſix Marchioneffes and Counteffes de Choiseul in France.)

The *Marshaleſſ de Choiseul* it certainly could not mean, as ſhe was eighty years old ; and it is improbable, as ſhe was not on good terms with the Dutchesſ, that ſhe ſhould have undertaken, through friendship, to ſettle with Leduc on her account.

All the articles however of Leduc's register, which related to the contested point, were extracted, and inserted in

the instruments preparing by the lawyers on behalf of Mademoiselle de Choiseul; who also desired to have this book deposited in safe hands, that recourse might be had to the original when requisite. To this Leduc, the son, consented. But, as there were memorandums in it relative to an infinite number of persons, he required to have the liberty to seal up himself every leaf in which there was nothing that related to Mademoiselle de Choiseul. This was proper and reasonable; and in that form the book remained to be inspected by the court.

The Duke de la Vallière used every effort to prevent the journal of Leduc being received as evidence. When he found that he could not accomplish it by other means of opposition, he insisted upon having the whole book inspected;

pected ; possibly supposing, that the contents of such a journal being publicly known, might be attended with such inconvenience, and occasion so much confusion, that the court itself would interfere to stifle the whole. In this also he failed. The six judges who were to decide upon the cause, took the book themselves, and having examined it, found only fourteen articles which related to the cause in question ; one of their number took a copy of those articles, and the book was carefully locked up.

The Duke then made another effort to suppress the evidence of the book entirely, but his attempt again failed. He was now therefore obliged to submit to have the cause tried in the very court, against the decisions of which he had, in the course of the controversy,

twice

twice appealed. The lawyers employed by Mademoiselle de Choiseul failed not to urge, with great ability, all the facts herein stated, to substantiate the claim of their client.

From the answers given by the Duke de la Vallière himself, the celebrated Le Normand, counsel for the plaintiff, drew an inference favourable to her cause. The Duke never declared that he did *not* believe Mademoiselle de Choiseul was born of his sister ; but only, that he did not know or believe that she was the daughter of the *Duke* and *Duchess* of Choiseul ; by which he tacitly allowed she might be the offspring of the *Duchess* ; and, while he could not deny the maternity, threw indirectly a reflection on the honour of his sister.

The letter written by Madame de Tournon

Tournon was a strong presumptive evidence, notwithstanding all her attempts to explain away its meaning; but the evidence given by the Chevalier de la Vallière was yet more conclusive. He acknowledged, that he knew his sister the Dutchesse de Choiseul had four children, a son and three daughters;—that his mother, and all the family, were apprised of her pregnancy in 1697;—that he knew the daughter of which she had been delivered was brought up by Madame d'Hautefort, under the name of St. Cyr;—and that, when his sister was dying, she told him she had recommended her youngest daughter to the protection, not only of Madame d'Hautefort, but to that of her brother the Duke de la Vallière, and that they had both promised to watch over her

her welfare. To these forcible evidences, was added the journal of Leduc ; and the whole seemed to form a body rather of positive facts than presumptive proof.

The Duke de la Vallière's defence consisted chiefly in reprobating the whole conduct of the defenders of Mademoiselle de Choiseul ; particularly their availing themselves of the journal of Leduc, in which circumstances were mentioned which threw an odium on the conduct of the Dutches de Choiseul, had they been true ; though it is observable, that the Duke de la Vallière's frequent repetition of his assertion, *that he did not believe the plaintiff to be the daughter of the Duke and Dutches of Choiseul*, threw the same kind of reflection on the memory of his sister.—The fact certainly was, that

that the plaintiff was born eight months and some days after the arrival of the Duke de Choiseul from being an hostage at the court of the Duke of Savoy; and for four years preceding that period he did not reside in the house with the Dutches, though he sometimes saw her.

When he was at Paris, he resided at the Temple, while the Dutches inhabited a house in rue Verneuil; circumstances that, together with the mysterious manner in which the child was brought up, certainly had the appearance of improper conduct in the Dutches. On this, however, the Duke de la Vallière laid no stress, but to exclaim against the conduct of Mademoiselle de Choiseul, who, in order to force herself into a family and property to which he protested she had no right, scrupled

scrupled not to stigmatise as an adulteress, a woman of the most unimpeached and respectable character ; and to disturb, with an odious calumny, the ashes of her from whom she pretended to derive her being.

But it was necessary, that, instead of idle declamation, the Duke de la Vallière should bring proof that his sister, the Dutchess de Choiseul, did not bring forth a child at the time this daughter was supposed to be born ; or that, if she did, this was not the person. Totally failing in those proofs, an arrêt passed in the great chamber, by a majority of twenty-two voices against nine, permitting Mademoiselle de Choiseul to prove to the court all the points her counsel had alledged. The whole power and interest of the Duke de la Vallière and his friends were exerted

erted to prevent this arret from being carried into execution.

They tried to prevail on the king to annihilate the whole proceeding, by an act of arbitrary power ; but the affair being laid before the council of state, the arret was confirmed.—In consequence of all the proofs being examined, sentence was given, in June 1726, whereby Augustina-Frances de Choiseul was fully established and maintained in her claim ; and was declared to be the daughter of Augustus de Choiseul, duke and peer of France, and of his wife, Louisa Gabriella de la Beaume le Blanc de la Vallière ; and all parties were forbidden, either by a renewal of the suit, or in any way whatever, to trouble her.

Mad<sup>me</sup> de Choiseul, whose health had always been extremely delicate, had

suffered such agitation of spirits during this long and expensive contest, as greatly to impair it.—When the suit, at some period of its progress, took a turn which made her friends tremble for her success, she fainted, and was carried out of court totally insensible. And to the anxiety of her mind it may be imputed, that she enjoyed her good fortune only a very short time. She had hardly been possessed of her rank eighteen months, when she fell into a decline, and died, as both her sisters had done, unmarried, and under thirty.

The influence of avarice appears very strong in this history.—The Duke de la Vallière undoubtedly knew that Mademoiselle de Choiseul was his niece; yet he could not determine to acknowledge her, when a restitution  
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of her fortune was in question—the same cruel self-interest prevailed with Madame de Tournon. It must however be allowed, that the circumstances of the birth, and mysterious manner in which the Marchioness d'Hautefort, the friend of the Dutchesse de Choiseul, educated her daughter, had a very unfavourable appearance; yet, as so little is known of the character of the Duke her husband, and that little does not place it in a very advantageous light, it was perhaps owing to his capricious or suspicious temper, that they were constrained to adopt measures injurious to the reputation of the Dutchesse, and fatal to the interest of her daughter.

The cause is related at great length by Guyot de Pitaval; but this abridg-

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ment is taken from the edition of *Les Causes Célèbres* by Richer, in which it occupies two hundred and twenty pages, containing many circumstances unnecessary or improper to be here related.

RENEE

## RENÉE CORBEAU.

A Young man, native of Séez in Normandy, of noble parents, studied the law at Angers. He there saw Renée Corbeau, the daughter of a tradesman of the town, and under a promise of marriage seduced her. Her situation was soon such as made it necessary to acquaint her parents with her engagement; who sought for means to oblige her lover to perform those promises which had induced Renée to listen to him.

Doubting that he would, if possible, evade them, the parents thought it might be necessary to employ artifice.

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They therefore pretended to take a journey; and, as soon as they believed the lovers were together, returned suddenly upon them, and, reproaching the young man with having seduced their daughter, insisted on his instantly making the only reparation in his power, by signing a contract of marriage, with which a notary was prepared, who was ready in the house. The young man signed the deed; but, feeling himself unworthily treated, in being thus surprised into an engagement which he had never refused to perform, he went immediately to his father, to whom he related all that had happened. The father, yet more enraged than the son, persuaded him to take priest's orders, as the only way to avoid completing a marriage so dishonourable and so contrary to his interest; and this advice he

he hastily embraced. The unfortunate girl, thus abandoned by her faithless lover, commenced, together with her parents, a suit against him for seduction. He was in consequence arrested, and the affair was brought before the parliament of Paris.

The sentence, after long pleading on both sides, was, that the young man, should either marry Renée Corbeau, or be beheaded: as his being a priest made the former impossible, he was to suffer death.

He was delivered to the executioner; the fatal moment was at hand, and the priest attended to perform the last duties—when Renée Corbeau flew to the place where his judges were yet sitting, and, making her way through the crowd, besought permission to

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speak; and a moment's suspension of the dreadful punishment about to be inflicted on her lover.

The judges, struck with her beauty and distress, consented to hear her—and with the simple and affecting eloquence of nature she pleaded for his life. She represented, that they undoubtedly thought her more unhappy than guilty, since they punished with death him who was supposed to have betrayed her; but that such a sentence, far from repairing her misfortune, would render it irreparable, by taking from her the only person who could restore her honour; and, instead of doing her justice, would condemn her to tears and remorse for the rest of her life; and would leave her to endless regret, when she reflected, that  
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her fatal love had been the occasion of his death, for whom only she wished to live.

She besought those among her judges, who had ever been sensible of the force of love, to put themselves for a moment in her situation, and to reflect what they would themselves suffer, were they to be deprived of the object of their affection, by a cruel death, and to know themselves the occasion of it; — “ for it is” said she, “ I who have armed the iron hand of law against him — 'tis I who am his executioner — and 'tis I who, infinitely more unhappy than he is, am condemned to exist under infamy, and to carry with me to the grave the dreadful reflection of having murdered him by the excess of my attachment.”

Though the holy orders, into which he had entered, prevented his marrying her, she represented that they had been compulsive, and made only through fear of a violent and imperious father: but that a dispensation might be obtained to dissolve them. She therefore implored the judges to suspend the execution of the sentence for a time, that her lover might take measures to annul his religious vows, and become her husband.

The Court, affected by her tears and despair, were induced to grant a respite for six months; and, as a legate from the Pope was then expected in France, she flattered herself she should obtain from him, permission for her lover to renounce the ecclesiastical habit and marry her.

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was the legate that soon after arrived, was so irritated against the young man, for having sacrilegiously embraced holy orders, only to evade an engagement which his honour and his conscience, as well as every human law, urged him to fulfil, that he absolutely refused to grant the dispensation ; and the unhappy Renée Corbeau was again driven to despair.—Henry the fourth, that excellent monarch, was then on the throne ; his ears were ever open to the complaints of his subject, and when youth and beauty pleaded, there was little doubt of redress from his compassion, though his justice was silent. Renée Corbeau threw herself at the King's feet, and the King, interested by her figure and situation, very soon suffered himself to be prevailed upon. He ordered that a dispensation might be granted ;

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granted ; it was immediately expedited, and the lover, thus snatched from impending destruction, was married to his mistress. — They lived together many years in the most perfect union ; the husband always remembering, with the tenderest gratitude, that he owed his life, and the honour of his family, to the affection and attachment of his wife.

F I N I S.



